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ANNUAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

SACRAMENTO

Society for Medical Improvement

MARCH 23, 1875,

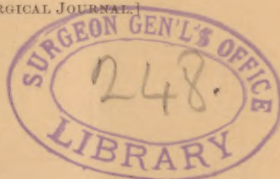
BY

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JOSEPH F. MONTGOMERY, M. D.,

*Upon Retiring from the Presidency of the Society.*

*Published by order of the Society.*

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# ANNUAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

*Sacramento Society for Medical Improvement.*

MARCH 29, 1875,

By JOSEPH F. MONTGOMERY, M. D.



UPON RETIRING FROM THE PRESIDENCY OF THE SOCIETY.

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*Gentlemen of the Society* :—In accordance with general and well approved custom, and which was early adopted and has been so gracefully carried out, from year to year, at our annual meetings, by my sole predecessor, the pleasant duty is devolved upon me at this, the seventh anniversary of our Society's organization, to present to you a resumé of our operations, and of the specially noticeable events that have transpired in our midst during the year just ended.

The manner and purpose of our organization, the many advantages and happy influences arising from and exerted by this and similar associations, and the progress made in the different departments of the profession, have been so frequently and graphically presented by him who has preceded me in this chair, that any attempt on my part to engage in the same role could but prove to you extremely irksome, and seem to all of us entirely supererogatory.

Commencing seven years ago with a membership of only twelve, several of the then resident practitioners having declined to affiliate with us at the time, we now number twenty-

five, nineteen of whom, embracing every member of the regular profession engaged here in active practice, are residents of the city. This fact stands as the best evidence we could adduce of the general correctness of our course, and of the favorable influence exerted by our conduct upon our professional brethren around and about us.

The good attendance of members, and their prompt discharge of duties assigned, alluded to in other annual addresses, have been fully maintained during the last year, and no sign of weariness or indifference has been manifested, but, on the other hand, an increased zeal and industry in our general exercises, and a livelier interest in everything pertaining to the honor, and dignity, and advancement of the profession, in every particular and in all its departments, have been clearly apparent.

The papers read before the Society prior to March 1873, have heretofore been enumerated in your presence, but those read from that time to March 1874 were omitted in the last annual address. Although not properly belonging to this occasion, yet, in justice to the authors, and to keep up an unbroken chain in the record showing our labors, I will here supply the omission, which was, doubtless, the result of oversight rather than of willful neglect.

During that period twelve papers were prepared and read as follows :

By Dr. Hatch, on Pelvic Hematoma.

Dr. Snider, Blood-letting.

Dr. Tyrrell, The Influenza of 1872-3.

Dr. White, Cancerum Oris.

Dr. Cluness, Ovariectomy.

Dr. Logan, Remarks in Relation to the Mortuary Statistics of California.

Dr. Harkness, Illustrations with the Microscope.

Dr. Haswell, Difficult Labors and their Treatment.

Dr. McGuire, Pharmacy in California.

Dr. Curtis, The Use of Atropia in Ophthalmic Medicine.

By Dr. Montgomery, Fracture of the Inferior Maxillary Bone.

Dr. Murphy, Patent Medicines and their Evils and the Remedy.

At and since our last annual meeting, the following papers in the order named have been read :

By Dr. Nelson, A Case of Cutaneous Cancer, or Warty Ulcer of Marjolin.

Dr. Nichols, Leprosy.

Dr. Nixon, Erysipelas.

Dr. Oatman, Dysmenorrhea.

Dr. Tyrrell, The Continued Fevers of Childhood.

Dr. White, The Treatment of Wounds.

Dr. Snider, Endometritis.

Dr. Cluness, Ovariectomy.

Dr. Fisher, Skin-Grafting.

Dr. Glissman, Albuminuria.

Dr. Logan, Malarial Diseases of California.

Dr. Hatch, What we Know of the Uses of Ergot in Disease.

As may be perceived, the subjects presented and treated in these papers are all highly interesting, and most of them eminently practical, and as these documents and the discussions they elicited embodied the actual personal experience of each and every member participating in their production or consideration, we could not fail to derive much profit from the entire procedure, as well as from the research such exercises tended to encourage and actually induced.

Our association was entered into and its exercises inaugurated and conducted for our mutual benefit and the welfare of this immediate community, and we can all, I think, freely testify that we have not been disappointed, as intimated, in our purposes and aims in this connection. We can, therefore, without hesitation or doubt, encourage our professional brethren in all towns or localities where even a few may be brought together at stated times, to organize similar societies for like aims and objects as those we have avowed.

Whether our papers and discussions, most of which have

been published, have benefitted others also, or reflected credit upon us, it is not for us to determine. It is not legitimate or seemly, nor yet profitable to boast, and I could not flatter you by complimenting you in your presence for what you may have done, for that would be to you distasteful. Besides, laudatory criticism tends to beget self-sufficiency; an over-estimate of achievements; a conceit that nothing more is left to be accomplished, and hence, may lead to a fatal relaxation of that persistent, untiring exertion so necessary to even incomplete success, leaving out of view or estimation any grand result. I would rather, instead, inculcate the idea that perfection is not to be attained; that our efforts towards improvement should never be abated, and that our highest glory is to tire not, to our life's end, in doing our utmost to relieve and restore to health our suffering fellow-men.

Within the year, and for the first time since our organization, death has invaded our ranks and removed in quick succession two of our number, as well as a young professional brother, a resident of San Francisco, though reared among us, a son of our esteemed ex-President, Dr. F. W. Hatch.

On the 21st of March, 1874, Dr. A. C. Donaldson, a man of singular purity of character and gentleness of manner, after spending a long life in the active duties of the profession, was, without a moment's warning, fatally stricken with apoplexy and died in a few hours. Eight days later, we received the startling intelligence that Dr. Thurston B. Hatch, while at the dinner-table, apparently in the enjoyment of robust health, in the bright morning of his life, and at the very threshold of a professional career that promised much distinction, was suddenly taken with a hemorrhage from the lungs so profuse as to forbid speech, and to terminate his existence in a few minutes. Later still, on the 12th day of May, our gifted, genial and accomplished brother, the distinguished oculist and aurist, Dr. Edward M. Curtis, after affectionately and reverently attending, when scarcely able so to do, the obsequies of the two recently deceased friends, with ample warning passed gently and calmly and heroically away, in the midst of his brilliant career as a specialist, ere

attaining the meridian of life, and when the measure of his fame was not yet full, a victim to that relentless scourge of our race and baffler of our skill, consumption.

These sorrowful events, gentlemen,--the removal hence of our brothers, chosen alike, one each, from the three distinctive stages of manhood, remind us most impressively that we know not when our final summons may come, and admonish us eloquently to be constantly prepared, as best we can, for the dread change that awaits us, and which, sooner or later, will overtake us all. The hopeful belief that our departed friends were thus prepared, is to us a source of some consolation, as is also the consciousness of having done what we could, since their demise, in all tenderness and sincerity, to testify feelingly our respect and affection for them.

Our meetings, and our general relations and intercourse with each other, have been, in the main, harmonious and highly agreeable and profitable, the only causes or incidents that marred in some degree that perfect harmony being a rather lax observance, on the part of some, of the beautiful and just and wise rules laid down for our guidance and government, in our admirable code of ethics. I have always, as many of you are aware, laid great stress upon the importance of giving more time and prominence to the teaching and study of the ethics of the profession, and I have ever maintained, and still maintain, that every honorable member of our brotherhood should learn well these special laws, imbibe their very essence, and carry out conscientiously and sacredly, in all his dealings with the public, and his conduct towards his fellows, both the letter and the spirit of their every provision. Until all thus act, it is folly to expect such harmony or that mutual respect and kindly regard one for another that should especially prevail among those engaged in the performance of such delicate and responsible duties as claim our attention.

The particular error or offense that caused the disturbance or ill-feeling hinted at was the strikingly frequent appearance in the secular press, in connection with accidents requiring surgical assistance, of the name of a particular

resident practitioner. Now, the Code of Ethics says: "It is derogatory to the dignity of the profession to resort to public advertisements or private cards, or handbills, inviting the attention of individuals affected with particular diseases, or to publish cases or operations in the daily prints, or suffer such publications to be made. These are the ordinary practices of empirics, and are highly reprehensible in a regular physician."

The cases just alluded to, and others to be mentioned, would fall under this provision, and the vicious, graceless, unfair and unprofessional habit of advertising one physician or another, in the manner stated, in connection with accidents, whether here or elsewhere, cannot be too severely censured and condemned by the profession. Indeed, the condemnation should be so general and decided as to disgrace and render odious all who may suffer their names to appear in such connection. It may be claimed that the press is free, and that reporters will thus insert names without sanction; but should surgeons be sufficiently in earnest in their efforts to have their names suppressed, and should the profession generally appeal to the press to respect their wishes in this particular, I must believe their appeal would not be in vain, but that the result would be the complete abolishment of the discreditable and offensive custom complained of.

Another deviation from the teachings of the Code, as quoted, is the form or terms of some professional cards in the newspapers, where he who may issue a particular one, while a general practitioner, expresses a preference for a particular department, and thus leads the public to infer that he is better qualified or skilled in that direction than his more modest, but yet, perhaps, not less meritorious fellows. This is, in my view, neither fair nor just. Still other provisions, I apprehend, are not as strictly observed by some as they should be. I allude to what is said under the heads of "Consultations" and "Interference." These provisions, as they appear in the Code, are not as strict or rigid as they should be to protect the rights and feelings of the attending physi-

cian in the one case, or of the one sought to be discarded or superseded in the other; but a proper regard for the spirit of the Code as a whole should lead any honorable and fair-minded physician to divine his duty, and to supply in his conduct the deficiency suggested. I would respectfully and specially commend these several articles to the careful attention of members, believing that we should all, from time to time, study, not only these, but the entire Code, to the end that we may the better understand and appreciate our ethical duties, and, by discharging them correctly and faithfully, protect the rights and wound not the feelings of each other.

If, in alluding to the errors or wrong-doings of members, and which we must hope were committed without due consideration and from no selfish or evil motive, I have employed terms that seem to you illiberal or unduly harsh, or if I have presumed to point too plainly or indiscreetly to any particular individuals, I pray both you and them to believe that I have been prompted thereto, not from the slightest unkindness or irritation towards any, but solely because of my intense hostility to every species of sharp practice or irregularity, and from a profound sense of obligation to encourage and effect, as far as practicable, wholesome reform, and to promote our general interests. To accomplish such reform, we must first be convinced of error; and, with the explanations and assurances here offered, I trust I may not be regarded as deserving either censure or resentment on account of the suggestions made in such behalf.

In conclusion, gentlemen, I must, in this enduring form, tender to you my most cordial acknowledgements for the honor you conferred upon me in calling me to the distinguished and responsible position of your presiding officer. The office was conferred, as you all know, wholly unsought; and its bestowal, as the free-will offering of my associates, took me completely by surprise and awakened within me the liveliest and warmest sentiments of pride and gratitude. It is only when such honors are thus freely tendered that they confer any distinction, or are of any worth; and

the remembrance of this mark of your generosity, and of the incidents and associations of my official term, will ever be grateful to my heart, and shall be classed with the most cherished recollections of my life. I fear, gentlemen, that I have but poorly discharged the duties imposed upon me, though supported by your kind indulgence and generous aid; but I can assure you, in all honesty, that I have striven to be rigidly impartial and strictly courteous towards all, and have aimed at nothing in my actions but the dignity and usefulness of the profession, and the harmony and welfare of the Society.

And now, believing that the honors of the Society should be handed around from one to another, or that the Presidency should be conferred, in turn, upon any, or all, deemed worthy; and having expressed these views prior to my election, to maintain my consistency and to relieve members fully from any possible embarrassment, I respectfully, and in perfectly good faith, decline a re-election to the place I am now ready to vacate.





